

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 TRSY-02 AID-05 CIAE-00
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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6324

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 415

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PINT, BH, UK, US

SUBJECT: POLITICAL NOTES

1. LAST WEEK AND WEEKEY BROUGHT FORTH AN INTERESTING CROSS SECTION OF BELIZEAN POLITICAL VIEWS, OPINIONS AND COMMENTS RANGING FROM INDEPENDENCE QUESTION THRU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT KRSUES IN SUGGESTIONS FOR NEWLY ARRIVED PRINCIPAL OFFICER. SOME OF FUROR-IF THAT WORD CAN BE USED DURING PRESENT BLISTERING HEAT WAVE-STARTED AT BELIZEAN AGRICULTURAL TRADE SHOW HELD ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY IN BELMOPAN.

2. TRADE SHOW EXCITEMENT STARTED WITH OPENING CEREMONIES, MAIN SPEAKER WAS ATTY. GENL. ASSAD SHOMAN WHO TROTTED OUT SOME FAIRLY BLAND THIRD WORLD NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS, ESPECIALLY ON MATTERS OF TRADE. SHOMAN DEMANDED BELIZE BE ABLE TO CONTROL ITS OWN ECONOMIC DESTINY AND HAVE GREATER CONTROL OVER PRICES OF EXPORTS SUCH AS SUGAR AND CITRUS. ACCUSED US AND UK (IN THAT ORDER) OF PREVENTING BELIZE FROM EXPORTING LOCAL PRODUCTS WHERE IT WISHED. CONCLUDED WITH STIRRING PLEA TO CUT BACK ON LUXURY IMPORTS. UK GOVERNOR, CONFIDENTIAL

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REPORTEDLY IN BAD MOOD OVER NON PLAYING GOD SAVE THE QUEEN, BECAME EVEN MOODIER. SEVERAL BELIZEANS COMMENTED TO CONGEN OFFICERS AT OUR BOOTH THEY FELT SHOMAN SHOULD STOP EATING IMPORTED BACON OFF OF IMPORTED ENGLISH BONE CHINA BEFORE ISSUING SUCH STATEMENT.

3. ON "THE PROBLEM" AT A CONVENTION RECENTLY CONCLUDED,

RULING PUP STALWARTS PUSHED THROUGH RESOLUTION STATING BELIZE WOULD NOT CEDE TERRITORY AND CALLING ON UK CEASE ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH GUATEMALA WHICH INVOLVED TERRITORIAL CHANGES. GOV. MCENTEE TOLD CONSUL GENERAL LATE LAST WEEK THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER THIS RESOLUTION IN ANY WAY HELPFUL AND WISHED PUP HAD NOT SEEN FIT TO PASS IT.

4. ON TOP OF ALL THIS NEWS, PAPERS AND BELIZE CITY ARE FULL OF REPORTS OF MASSIVE OIL DISCOVERIES IN NORTHERN REGION. THIS STEMS FROM ARTICLE IN A MEXICAN NEWSPAPER- CONGEN HAS REQUESTED ABSTRACT FROM MEXICAN POSTS-WHICH QUOTES PEMEX GEOLOGISTS AS SAYING BELIZE "FIND" IS PART OF MAJOR MEXICAN DISCOVERIES IN CHIAPAS AND QUINTANA ROO PROVINCES. BELIZE NEWSPAPERS CLAIM DISCOVERY HAS BEEN KEPT TOP SECRET (BY WHOM DEPENDS ON PAPER. UDP SAYS PUP IS RESPONSIBLE, PUP CLAIMS OIL COMPANIES GUILTY PARTIES.)

5. WHILE THIS HAS BEEN GOING ON, BOTH PRICE AND UDP LEADER LINDO PLAN OVERSEAS TRIPS. PRICE, WHO ACCORDING TO REPORTS WILL TAKE DEPUTY PREMIER ROGERS, TO DISCUSS GOVERNMENT POSITION ON INDEPENDENCE QUESTION AND LINDO, BOTH TO COUNTER PRICE AND UT SAME TIME TO PUSH UDP POSITION ON GUATEMALA DISPUTS.

6. THE INDEPENDENT REPORTER STATES THAT THERE ARE UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT BARBADOS GUAYANA AND JAMICA HAVE SIGNED IN BELMOPAN A PACT WITH BELIZE TO COME TO THE LATTER'S DEFENSE
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IF "IT (BELIZE) IS THREATENED WITH INVASION FROM GUATEMALA."
THIS SEEMS HIGHLY UNLIKELY.

7. FINALLY, THE GOVERNMENT (READ PUP) BELIZE TIMES WELCOMED NEW CONSUL GENERAL AND WIFE TO BELIZE AND WENT ON TO STATE US POSITION IN THE ANGLO GUATEMALAN DISPUTE"HAS BEEN UNCERTAIN AND UNCLEAR" AND "SUGGESTS THAT (US) SUPPORTS THE WRONGFUL CLAIM OF GUATEMALA TO BELIZEAN TERRITORY." ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH ADDITIONAL TRIVIAL COMMENTS OF LARGELY UNHELPLESS NATURE. WE DO NOT PROPOSE TO TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST THESE VERY MINOR TROUBLES.

8. NONE OF THIS IS PARTICULARLY HEADY WINE; TO BELIZEANS, HOWEVER, THERE IS A BIT OF EXCITEMENT, POSSIBLY EVEN GROWING POLITICAL FERMENT WHICH STIMULATES AND, IN SOME CASES, PLEUSES THE MOB. THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED MEETING OF MINISTERS OF CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE, WITH ITS LARGE CUBAN DELEGATION CONTRIBUTED TO THIS FEELING. A "CULTURAL" EVENING WHICH BROUGHT THE CONVENTION TO A CLOSE FEATURED "FOLK" AND "INTERPRETIVE" DANCES; THE FORMER HAD OBVIOUS AFRICAN ELEMENTS IN IT, THE LATTER, SOME OF THE STYLE OF MODERN, AMERICAN BLACK DANCE TROUPES. NEITHER

EFFORT WAS PARTICULARLY GOOD, NEITHER SEEMED TO HAVE ANY MESSAGE OTHER THAN A MILD STATEMENT OF BELIZE'S HERITAGE- AT LEAST ONE PART OF IT. THE NEXT MORNING, SEVERAL PEOPLE COMMENTED ON THE PERFORMANCE, SOME SAYING IT WAS OUTRIGHT RACIST-WHICH IT WASN'T-AND MANY SAYING THAT SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAD NEVER OCCURRED BEFORE IN THE TOWN.

9. ALL OF THIS MAY MEAN THAT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOLLOWED BY AN AGRICULTURE SHOW IS MORE THAN THE LOCAL CIRCUITS CAN STAND OR IT MAY MEAN THE LOCAL POLITICAL THERMOMETER IS CLIMBING JUST A DEGREE OR TWO. WE TEND TOWARDS THE LATTER. THE JULY CRISIS, THE HARRIERS, THE STIMULATION OF THE OFF-AGAIN ON-AGAIN TALKS, THE CUBAN ANGLE--ALL OF THESE EVENTS LEND THEMSELVES TO A FEELING OF CONFIDENTIAL

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EXCITEMENT WHICH MIGHT GROW.
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NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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